

Immigration and Displacement: A Study of Identity Crisis in Bharati Mukherjee's Jasmine

Janagarraj, K.

Assistant Professor of English Literature, SRM Arts and Science College, Kattankulathur, Chennai,
Tamil Nadu

CITATION

Janagarraj, K. (2026). Immigration and Displacement: A Study of Identity Crisis in Bharati Mukherjee's Jasmine
Shodh Manjusha: An International Multidisciplinary Journal, 03(01), 190–194.
<https://doi.org/10.70388/sm250200>

Article Info

Received: Oct 21, 2025

Accepted: Nov 23, 2026

Published: Jan 20, 2026

Copyright



This article is licensed under a license Commons Attribution-Non-commercial-No Derivatives 4.0 International Public License (CC BY-NC-ND 4.0)

<https://doi.org/10.70388/sm250200>
0

ABSTRACT

The aim of the paper is to portray the identity crisis in the novel of Jasmine. Bharati Mukherjee explores her experience of immigration through her protagonist. She talks about the personal life of her throughout the novel. She depicts the struggle of women characters that have a desire to get their identity. They have been faced lot of obstacles in their migrated land. One can find ennumbers of diasporic writers but their inner root of diaspora is different person to person. Mukherjee has clearly portrayed the identity crises of a woman by adapting multicultural identity in her novel *Jasmine*. She has explained exploitation of Jasmine who is the protagonist of this novel. She focuses the bitter experiences of the protagonist such as oppression and displacement. Thus, Mukherjee talks about the wounds of a woman who lost her identity in the alienated land in order to acquire her identity in the multicultural diasporic world.

Keywords: Identity crisis, Bharati Mukherjee, Jasmine, Diaspora, Immigration

Immigration and Displacement

Bharati Mukherjee is an Indian Canadian writer who has given the novel, *Jasmine* to explore the diasporic literature. She clearly depicts the diasporic literature in the novel, *Jasmine*. One

Empowering Women Entrepreneurs in MSMEs: A Study of Growth, Finance, and Government Initiatives in Haryana

can understand that how the typical middle-class woman transforms into independent women in order to live her own life. *Jasmine* is a notable literary work in the writings of diaspora. It shows the protagonist's experience and cultural differences. The novelist deliberately connects the cultural and personal aspects of the protagonist in the immigrant land. Through her character *Jasmine*, she explains the dislocation. Identity is a significant in everyone's personal life. Without the identity, it is very difficult to survey in the social life. In connection, Mukherjee consciously exposes the identity crisis in her novel. Her novel deals the issues of alienation and identity crisis. She shows that how the protagonist, *Jasmine* faces the problem of cross culture. However, protagonist undergoes the problems but never she gives up.

Jasmine does not like to die and she wants to empower by living in this world to cross the hurdles and obstacles. She always remembers the voice of *Prakash* who is the husband of her to live in this world. He says that "there is no dying, there is only as ascending or a descending, a moving on to other planes. Don't crawl back to *Hasanpur* and feudalism that *Jyoti* is dead" (J 86). *Jasmine* believes that *Prakash* is different than others because he always motivates her come out from her fear. It is clearly given from the context, "You are small and sweet heady, my *Jasmine*. You'll quicken the whole world with your perfume" (J 77).

Jasmine gets courage and ready face any kind of circumstances and she acts as brave and bold woman. She moves with self-reliance and comes out from male domination. She wants to start up her new life so she plans to leave with her husband. It emphasises that her change over against the suppression. She becomes a revolutionary woman in identity and she is against to social norms and set up. In addition, she chooses her husband, *Prakash*, intelligent young. She makes her to be a new version in every time. She continues an adventures journey in her life and she brings a development in her personal in alienated land and culture.

Being an immigrant, her identity is mixed up with native identity. Her desire is examined from the statement which reveals that she wants to become a doctor and to start her own clinic. One can aware from this, "I want to be a doctor and set up my own clinic in a big town" (J 62). She loses her memory of life in *Punjab*, India. She struggles with dual identity and she could not go further with her own identity. Her identity is lost due to the immigration and shifted life which leads her new life with adopted changes. She transforms herself as nanny and she rescues her job. She feels happy and interest in being of nanny. She faces love

proposal by many gentlemen and she realises to make relationship with Taylor and she moves with him for new life. She is like an independent and self-decision woman which makes her to be in trouble and faces lot of issues. She realises her freedom that gives a taste with different opportunity. In some situation, she takes risk in order to attain her individuality and freedom. She is never discouraged when she moves America.

Jasmine searches her identity throughout the novel. In many of the places, she has proclaimed that a liberated woman and wife. One can know the mindset of white people who always make problem to the immigrants. The white people think that immigrant has to adopt the new culture by leaving their cultural identity. This kind of racism is in the minds of white people that show from the context, "Calamity Jane, Jane as in Jane Russell not Jane as in plain Jane. But plain Jane is all I want to be plain Jane is a role like another" (J26).

There is a clash between immigrants and white people because of multiculturalism. The oppression brings identity crisis in group and individual. *Jasmine* is a story of young woman from India who immigrates to Canada experiences the identity crisis. Mukherjee narrates that Jasmine searches for her identity. The novel involves the struggle of the protagonist which is experienced by every immigrant and the challenges of her which is racial and cultural identity. Her struggle portrays the migration in alienated land. The novel focuses the opposition of dominant power of men and the protagonist stands against to the patriarchal system.

The novelist gives clarity between Jyoti and Jasmine and their identities. Jyoti's survival is under hegemony of traditional patriarchy and she comes with rebirth who can tackle everything in new life. She faces the identity crisis in Canada only which is socially constructed. She has quest for identity and she transforms for the displacement. She is entered in to alienated land through backdoor only as that is her desire of living in the dreamland. It has proved from the statement:

"The first thing I saw were the two cones of a nuclear plant, and smoke spreading from them in complicated but seemingly purposeful patterns, edges lit by the rising sun, like a gray, intricate map of an unexplored island continent, against the pale unscratched blue of the sky. I waded through Eden's waste: plastic bottles, floating oranges, boards, sodden boxes, white

Empowering Women Entrepreneurs in MSMEs: A Study of Growth, Finance, and
Government Initiatives in Haryana

and green plastic sacks tied shut but picked open by birds and pulled apart
by crabs.” (J 95)

Her migration dream collapses her and makes her to be worst. She is stopped in the night sometimes in the alienated land. She has been raped by the man and also humiliated. She is stopped in the night sometimes in the alienated land. She gets irritated and she wants to revenge for that rape and humiliation which is undergone by her, at last she burns them. She feels a death when there is a rape. It is clearly given by Mukherjee in the context:

“He looked at me, and at the suitcase...He hefted the bag onto the bed and unsnapped the catches. Out came my sandalwood Gampati. He propped it up against a picture on the dresser...

“Who’s this for?” he demanded. “A kid?”

“It is my husband’s,” I said.

“Kind of a scrany little bastard, ain’t he?” He laughed and dropped the jacket back in the suitcase.” (J 101)

The protagonist decides to kill the people who are behind rape; at last, she kills them and kills her identity and past. She starts her new life and identity. She lives the new culture when she adapts to the new life style. She continues the American way of life. She observes that she has killed that Indian life in order to take new culture and life. It is shown from the context, “I got the point. He needed to work here, but he didn’t have to like it. He had sealed his heart when he’d left home. His real life was in an unlivable land across oceans. He was a ghost, hanging on.” (J 136)

Conclusion

Mukherjee presents her protagonist Jasmine as getting rebirth every day. Jasmine faces the challenges and exploring the world through migration. Her strength is proved in many places and she fights for the rights. Being an independent woman, she never believes the norms of patriarchy. She creates her new world in order to live her as she likes. She continuously tries to establish her new identity and culture. Thus, this novel has a combination of two stories

Janagarraj, K.

and two cultures. She is dominated by the male centred western culture and she sacrifices lot in her life due to the power pressure. The domination forces her to live with multicultural identity.

References

1. Bhatia, S. (2007). *American karma: Race, culture and identity in the Indian diaspora*. University Press.
2. Mukherjee, B. (1989). *Jasmine*. Grove Press Publication.
3. Roy, S. (1996). *Jasmine: Exile as spiritual quest in the fiction of Bharati Mukherjee* R. K. Dhawan (Ed.). Prestige Books.